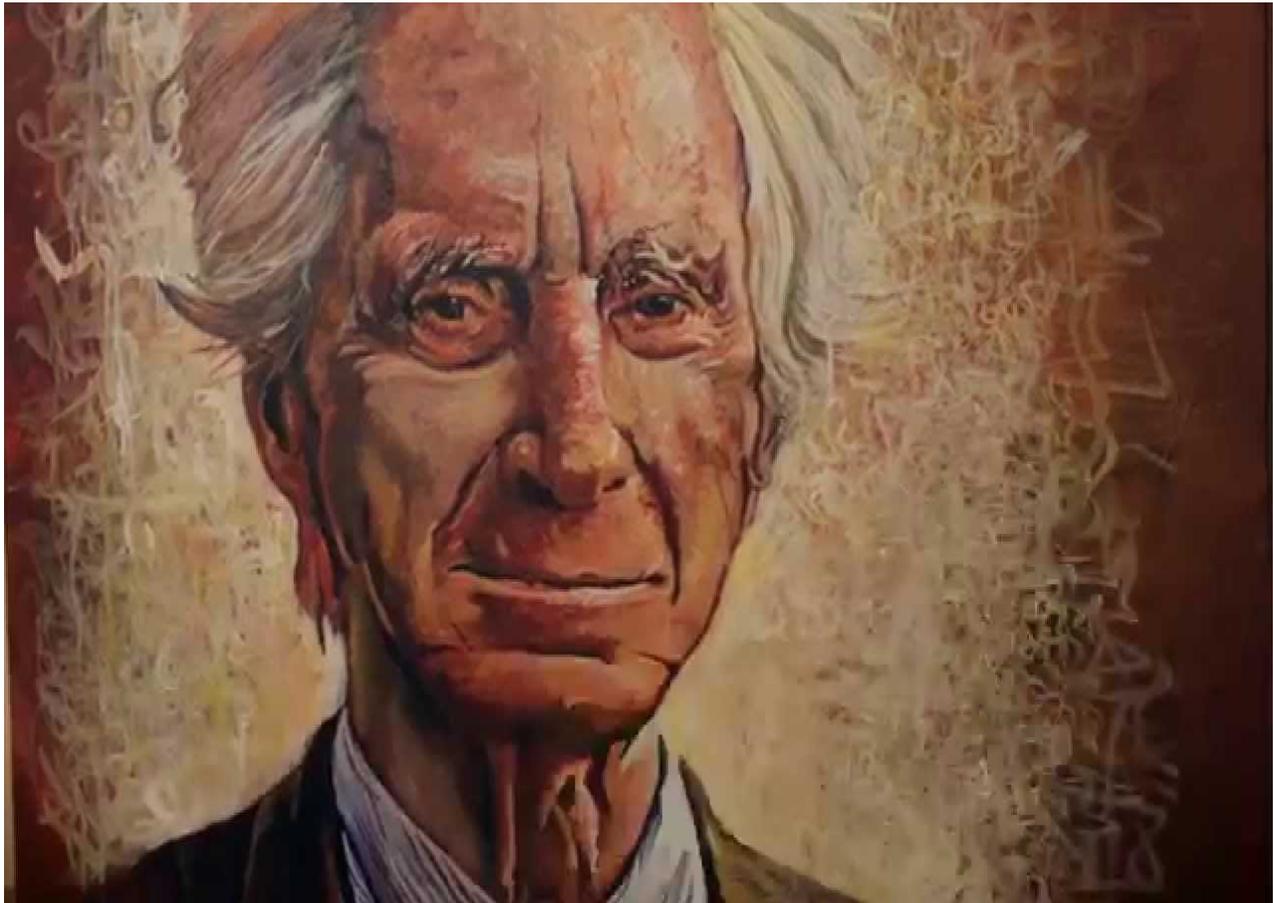


Essay

Leisure and Creativity: Anil Shrivastava



Bertrand Russell

Sorry folks for my absence. I was busy doing nothing. It was a bliss. I didn't have anxiousness to go on social media, check email, watch bad news on television and the stresses of work. I didn't suffer from insomnia, anxiety, depression, and unremitting stress either. I remembered the words of a wise man, "When your car goes out of control or your mind wanders uncontrollably, put them in idle." I did exactly the same and now I feel reinvigorated.

I enjoyed listening to Ghalib's ghazals (a nineteenth century Urdu poet), reacquainting myself with American presidents, World Wars, American poets, ancient history, basic

science, and Shakespeare's heroines. I caught up with the old issues of The New Yorker (especially the humor section) and played with my grandkid.

I thought a lot about Bertrand Russell's essay, 'In Praise of Idleness.' I read some of his essays in my youth and was always impressed by his perennial philosophy. Russell was a great believer in individual creativity and felt that the workers of the world should get more leisure time to use their imagination. Here is an excerpt from his essay:

"In a sensible world, everybody concerned in the manufacturing of pins would take to working four hours instead of eight, and everything else would go on as before. ... The men still work eight hours, there are too many pins, some employers go bankrupt, and half the men previously concerned in making pins are thrown out of work."

Today, we have the technology and infrastructure to greatly reduce the forced workload of the average human, and that should be our goal. The workers should be liberated from excessive work so that they can freely pursue the things that bring them intrinsic joy and happiness. After all, we all accept that happiness is the most important thing in life.

The wealthiest 1% of the global community controls over half of the world's wealth and in which the average person works a job that is disconnected from the basic realities of life. Huge portions of humanity spend their days balancing someone else's checkbook, or trying to sell people gizmos that they don't need, or moving pixels around on a digital screen to make the display more aesthetically pleasing, or talking on the phone with people who are dissatisfied with a product that they didn't need in the first place. Russell writes:

"Leisure time creates the space necessary for imagination, inquiry, aesthetic contemplation, introspection, and the pursuit of that which one finds most exciting and rewarding." Look at Michael Angelo, Beethoven and Shakespeare. Could we have statue of David, Symphony 5 or Romeo and Juliet, if they had a 9 to 5 jobs with occasional requirement to work overtime?

So, let's stop complaining about automation or China and India taking our jobs. We should feel lucky that our work hours are reduced. Of course, there is no need for the employers to reduce our wages. They make enough money to share their wealth with their employees. When wealth is distributed, there is more prosperity and peace in the neighborhood. That's the reason, I don't mow my lawn, clean the snow or work around the house. I am not lazy. I am just trying to spread the happy times and I am loving it!